

June 2004

OSHA Driving Standard ?

Preliminary data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the National Safety Council estimate that over 6 million vehicle crashes occur each year resulting in 2.3 million disabling injuries and 44,000 deaths. This means vehicle crashes:

* cost each of us more than \$800 per year (\$243 billion);

* is the number one cause of work-related deaths.



Besides the devastating human toll of these injuries and deaths, it is a staggering cost to employers in medical care, absenteeism and lost productivity. Such statistics usually lead OSHA to develop a standard to address the hazard, and OSHA tried. A NHTSA 2003 study indicated that 58% of fatalities were unbelted and 40% involved impaired driving. The rule OSHA contemplated in the 1980's based on similar studies would have required employers to ensure workers buckled up when driving on company business and would have mandated driver training. Seat belts have been proven to reduce the risk of serious injury or death in a crash by 45%. More than 1,500 American lives could be saved each year if states would enact mandatory seat belt laws for all ages. However, the opposition, to this point, has been too great citing it duplicated existing state seat belt laws. In 2004 there are still states without a mandatory seat belt law.

(South Carolina has a mandatory seat belt law but only for those under 18 and attempts this last legislative session to expand it to all ages again failed.) So, in a policy shift in April 2004, OSHA said it would name a Special Assistant to help lead the agency's efforts to better educate employers on the benefits of an effective fleet management program. OSHA also would revive a 1997 Presidential executive order mandating seat-belt use for federal workers on government business.

SC B&CB Fleet Safety Program

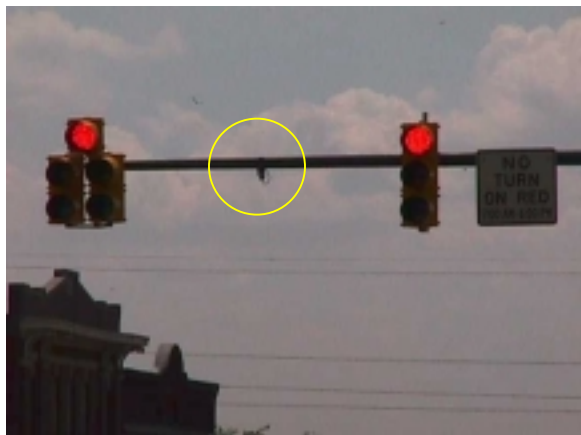
The SC B&CB was directed by state law (a 1982 Amendment to the Motor Vehicle Management Act) to develop and implement a fleet safety program to reduce the number of accidents involving state-owned vehicles and to reduce rising insurance premiums. The Board's Fleet Safety Program applies to all persons and agencies (not exempted) operating state vehicles and establishes minimum mandatory requirements including driver qualifications, selection and screening, and education. The program requires the wearing of seat belts. Drivers must also attend an 8-Hour training course within 90 days and a 4-Hour refresher training course every three years thereafter. Accidents are to be reported to Safety and an Accident Review Board (consisting of Safety, Insurance and Agency members) will recommend appropriate re-training or loss of state driving privileges. The program also recognizes drivers that reach safe driving milestones.

Driving Behavior

Strict enforcement is the best deterrent for dangerous driving behaviors like speeding, alcohol impairment, red-light running, aggressive driving and others. The National Safety Council estimates

driver behaviors like these contribute to 90% of all motor vehicle crashes. In their battle to keep our roadways safe, law enforcement agencies are getting new technology such as radar guns, cameras to monitor intersections, aircraft patrols, in-car computers, and improved communications equipment.

Smile, you're on camera



New automatic traffic cameras in Columbia SC can catch you running red lights and send you a ticket! Look closely and you'll see the camera mounted between the two traffic lights (Gervais & Assembly)

Traffic signal enforcement is getting automated cameras that snap photos of vehicles whose drivers run a red light. A camera is mounted so it views the intersection. When the light turns red, ground sensors detect vehicles entering the intersection and the camera takes pictures of the rear of the vehicle and the license plate. A ticket is then issued. Richard Retting of the Virginia-based Insurance Institute for Highway Safety said, "The chance of a violator being caught is very, very low and drivers know that. If they do it over and over again, and don't get caught, then there's little incentive to follow the law other than being a nice guy. The goal of the (red-light camera) program is not just to ticket violators, but to deter violations in the first place." Detective Teri Dorn of the Mesa AZ Police Department said, "We always try to educate people. That's one of our main focuses, too – not just enforcement, but education for the public,

so they understand that this system is a good thing for their safety and for their families' safety." Cameras in conjunction with radar are also being used to enforce speed limits.

Summer Travel Safety

Like many other families this summer, you will be packing up your car, van or truck and heading out to the lake, mountains or beach on vacation!

Prepare

There are some things you need to do before pulling out of your driveway for your trip. Get your vehicle checked to make sure it's in good working order. If anything needs repair or replacing, do it. You don't want to waste your vacation sitting on the side of the road for a tow truck, do you? Check your tires for wear and inflation, including your spare. Make sure your headlights, turn signals, and brake-lights work. If your wiper blades streak, they probably need replacing, and make sure there is plenty of windshield washer fluid. An emergency flashlight, emergency triangle markers, and a first aid kit are a good idea to have, too. Watch the weather channel and see what type of weather to expect then get a good night's sleep. You want to be prepared just like your vehicle.

Travel

Finally, you're on the road. Most vacation trips take more than just a few hours to get there so you will need to take a break every couple of hours (more frequently if you have kids!). Stop whenever you get tired and stretch or even take a power nap. There probably will be construction somewhere along the way, too. Be sure to slow down and be extra careful around work zones; workers and equipment can pop out suddenly. We all like to get to our destinations as soon as possible to relax and have fun, but if you have to travel more than 500 miles, seriously think about stopping along the way. Don't be tempted to push it.

Traffic & Vehicle Safety Over the Years

- 1757: Boston passes an ordinance against “fast driving” – horse-drawn carriages/ coaches no faster than a walk
- 1835: The Highway Act requires keeping to the left side of the road
- 1886: Daimler builds first gasoline-powered car
- 1889: 1st recorded traffic death (NYC)
- 1903: Manual windshield wiper patented by Mary Anderson of Birmingham AL
- 1903: New York state prints first set of traffic regulations
- 1907: 1st seat belt offered (Thomas Flyer)
- 1908: Rhode Island becomes 1st state to require a driver’s license
- 1910: New York requires annual registration (fees & fines support road maintenance) and lights at night
- 1918: 4-Wheel hydraulic brakes developed
- 1923: 1st high school driver education (Gilbert MN)
- 1925: Front & rear bumpers become standard
- 1952: Patents filed for air bags
- 1962: Seat belt anchorages become standard
- 1968: Shoulder belts added
- 1980: Anti-lock braking system introduced on American cars
- 1986: Commercial Driver’s License Act
- 1988: Chrysler is 1st to offer air bags
- 2003: 21 states have primary seat belt law; 46 states adopt 0.8 as the blood alcohol content limit

SOURCE: *Safety + Health*, June 2004: *Washington Update*, pg 20-21; *A Safe Driver?* pg 22-26; *Enforcement at the speed of lights*, pg 27-31; *Summer Travel Safety*, pg 71

Where Vehicle Accidents Happen Around Columbia SC



The numbers indicate rankings for the intersection or stretch of road with accidents where #1 is the most frequent. In Columbia, the area one is most likely to become involved in an accident is on Broad River Road between I-20 and Harbison Road.